

**Town of Milton**  
**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**October 24, 2023**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members:** Laura Turgeon (Chair), Bob Carrier, Renata Gamache, Peg Hurd, Kim Wischnewski, Stephanie Mills, Claudine Burnham

**Absent:** Mike Beaulieu

**Staff:** Chief Richard Krauss- Milton Police Department

Laura Turgeon, Chair, opened the session at 6:00PM.

**1.) Pledge of Allegiance:** Laura Turgeon, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2.) Roll Call:**

- a. Ms. Turgeon, Chair, led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present. Laura Turgeon (Chair), Kimberly Wischnewski, Bob Carrier, Peg Hurd, Renata Gamache, Stephanie Mills, Claudine Burnham. A quorum was present.

**3.) Review/Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Hurd motioned to approve the September 26, 2023, minutes with corrections. Ms. Mills seconded the motion.

**Laura Turgeon, Peg Hurd, Bob Carrier, Renata Gamache, Kim Wischnewski, Claudine Burnham, Stephanie Mills voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7/0/0.**

**4.) School Expenditure Reports, Revenue and Grant Reports:**

Ms. Hurd provided information to update and answer questions on the over-expended line-items. Superintendent Adam Houghton continues to scrutinize all budget line-items. Ms. Turgeon said she recently met with Mr. Houghton to review the reports. She agreed Mr. Houghton is making the overall process much smoother compared to previous years. The school budget is nearing completion. Ms. Mills indicated after reviewing the account details reports, she continues to have many questions, comments, and concerns.

Ms. Turgeon and other Budget Committee members said they dislike the way the school handles encumbrances which is very different from how the town does. It does not make sense to encumber line items where they are only guessing at how much will be spent, like diesel fuel, and electricity. They can't possibly know how much their bill will be from month to month. Only in cases where they have an actual invoice for non-contractual expenses should they show an encumbrance. Ms. Mills said she understands the need for the school to separate line-items between the three schools; ongoing explanations have helped with understanding; Ms. Turgeon agreed that this is becoming clearer.

A question arose regarding electricity, as this line has significantly increased. Ms. Hurd was asked why this was occurring since the school district recently spent a lot of money to have LED lights

installed throughout the schools. Ms. Hurd explained Mr. Houghton is aware of the increase and is checking with both Eversource and Affinity for an explanation.

Ms. Turgeon asked about Transportation line-item salary; it appears this is for four bus drivers along with the Transportation Coordinator. Ms. Hurd explained they are currently running three buses and one special ed; this is due to the driver shortage. The Transportation Coordinator also drives. Ms. Hurd explained that the Transportation Coordinator Salary line item is separate from the amount received from driving.

Ms. Hurd said she has all the questions and concerns to take to Mr. Houghton to help provide further clarification on account numbers and title changes. She requested permission for Ms. Mills to meet with Mr. Houghton and go over the account numbers and naming convention so everything matches and the macros in the spreadsheet can be adjusted. Ms. Mills said this should make it easier and increase understanding. Ms. Turgeon agreed.

#### **5.) Town Expenditure Reports:**

**Welfare:** Ms. Turgeon explained the Welfare line-item is currently over budget by \$31,000. This is primarily due to federal assistance ending and an increase of residents who are experiencing hard times and require rental and other assistance. Diana Brown is working part-time in Welfare; the last 4-5 months have seen more activity. In addition, postage is up due to an increase in cases this past year which leads to an increase in documents needing mailed. Ms. Burnham said the Board of Selectmen have really focused on this area and explained it's not just Milton who is experiencing issues; the majority of New Hampshire towns and cities are struggling with welfare.

**Library:** It was noted the phone line-item increased from \$75/month to \$200/month. The library is looking at other options.

Ms. Mills said both the Fire Department and Highway Department phone line-item are over. Chief Krauss explained these systems, along with Police and new Town Hall are switching carriers and will move over to Consolidated Communications from FirstLight Fiber. It's expected the Police and Fire Departments will be the first to switch over to Consolidated on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Eventually all entities will follow.

**Winding Road Bridge:** Ms. Burnham updated the Budget Committee and town residents on what is happening with the Winding Road bridge. The total package will cost \$344,000; to initiate construction the town would need \$290,000. The plan is to install a temporary bridge at a cost of \$1,500/month (\$18,000/yr for the next 3 years). A Warrant Article will be put before the town which would help build up the Capital Reserve Fund. Ms. Burnham said this is going to be a long process. Currently about 40 houses are impacted on Heron Circle, Rookery, Liberty, and Winding Road. It is essential these homes have access to school buses, emergency vehicles and other delivery vehicles like fuel, etc.

**Police Department:** Chief Krauss said he will have two changes to his budget.

**6.) Other business that may come before the board:**

There was no other business.

**7.) Public Comments or Questions on Budget Committee Meeting Topics:**

There were no comments.

**8.) Next Regular BC Meeting: November 28, 2023**

Joint School Meeting – November 15, 2023, 6:00PM

Joint BOS Meeting – November 16, 2023, 6:00PM

**9.) Adjournment:**

- a. Ms. Hurd motioned to adjourn at 8:05PM; Seconded by Ms. Mills. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Amy Winslow-Weiss, Recording Secretary – Budget Committee**